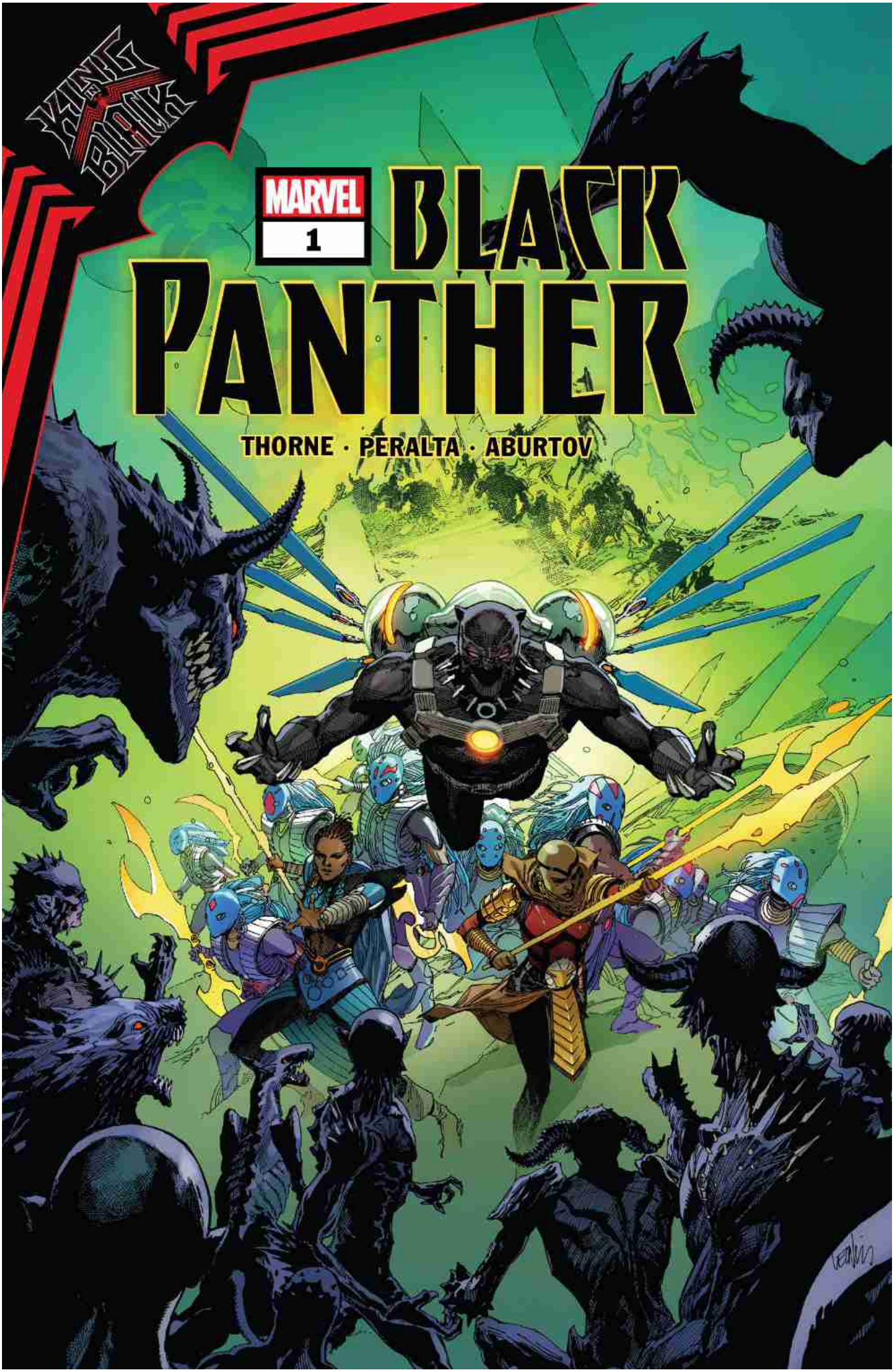
KING IN BLACK
MARVEL
1
BLACK PANTHER
THORNE · PERALTA · ABURTOV

KNULL, THE PRIMORDIAL AND MALICIOUS GOD OF THE SYMBIOTES, HAS ARRIVED ON EARTH WITH AN ARMY OF SYMBIOTE DRAGONS. ALL OF EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE ASSEMBLED TO STOP HIM – BUT SOME OF THEM HAVE NOW FALLEN PREY TO THE SYMBIOTES' DARK INFLUENCE, AND KNULL'S ARMY ONLY CONTINUES TO SPREAD ACROSS THE GLOBE.

BLACK PANTHER

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BLACK PANTHER CREATED BY STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY

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"ATTEND ME, T'CHALLA. TAKE HEED OF WHAT I SAY."
ORORO...
NYC. THEN.
"EVERY PROBLEM YOU MAY FACE, EVERY OBSTACLE IN YOUR WAY, IS SUSCEPTIBLE TO PROPER PLANNING."
DON'T THINK ABOUT HER NOW.
"PLAN, MY SON. PLAN WELL. WITH A SOBER MIND. WITH AN ICY EYE.

"DUTY. KNOWLEDGE. HONOR. LOYALTY. JUSTICE. THESE ARE THE *CLAWS* OF THE PANTHER CLAN.
WAKANDA. NOW.
"BAST TELLS US VICTORY LIVES IN THE *MIND* BEHIND THE CLAW.
"THE *BLACK PANTHER* MUST BE THAT MIND."
"BUT WHAT OF THE CLAWS, FATHER?"
"OH, MY SON..."

"WE MUST ALWAYS BE THAT AS WELL."
KRABOOM
WARRIOR! SHEATH!
MY KING!
THANK YOU FOR MY LIFE, MY KING.
NEVER MIND THAT!
SHEATH! NOW!

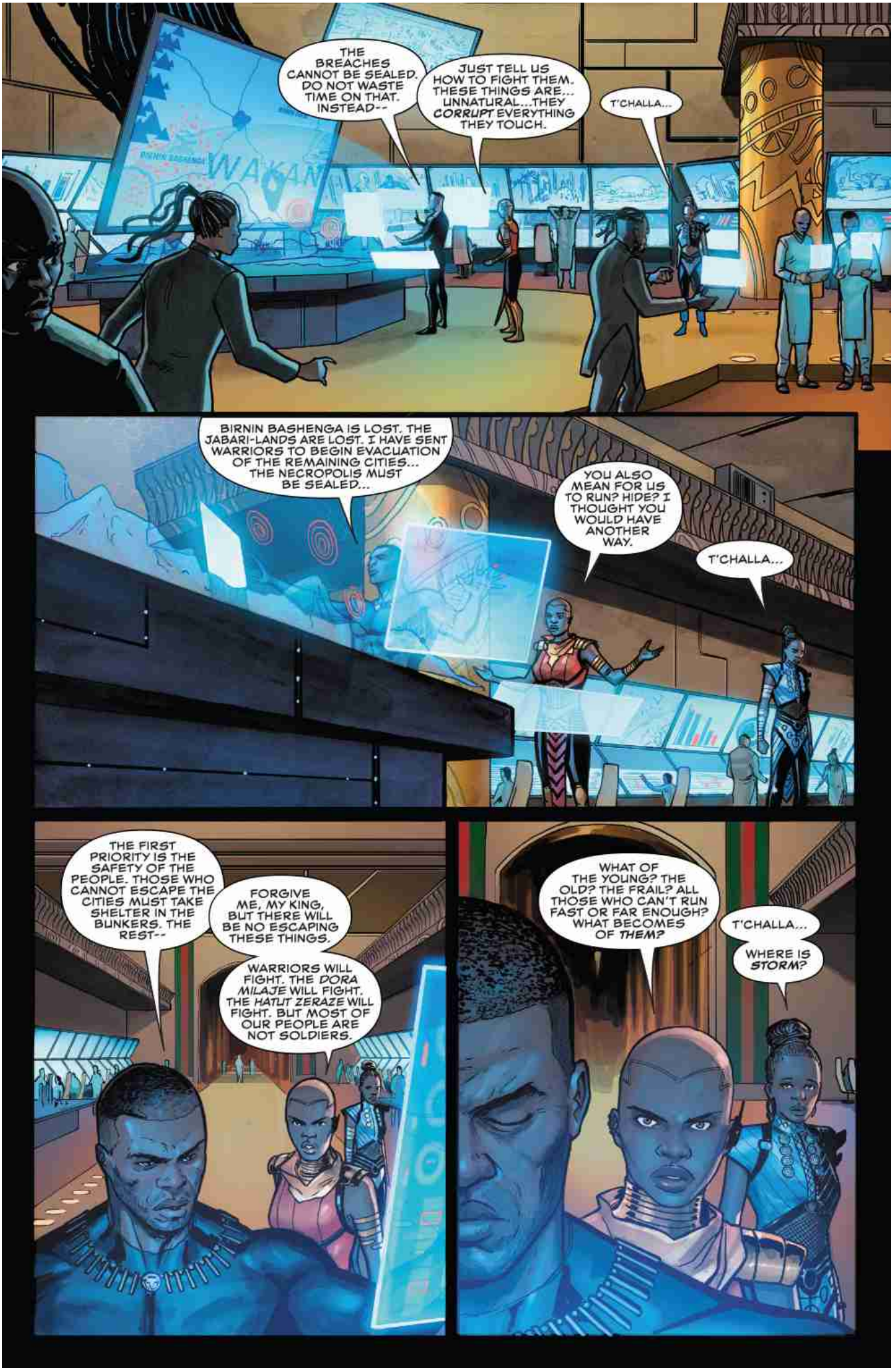
NDIYATHOBELA.*
*XHOSA FOR "I OBEY."
WARRIORS!
DON YOUR SHEATHS!
RALLY TO ME!
WE CANNOT SAVE THE FALLEN!

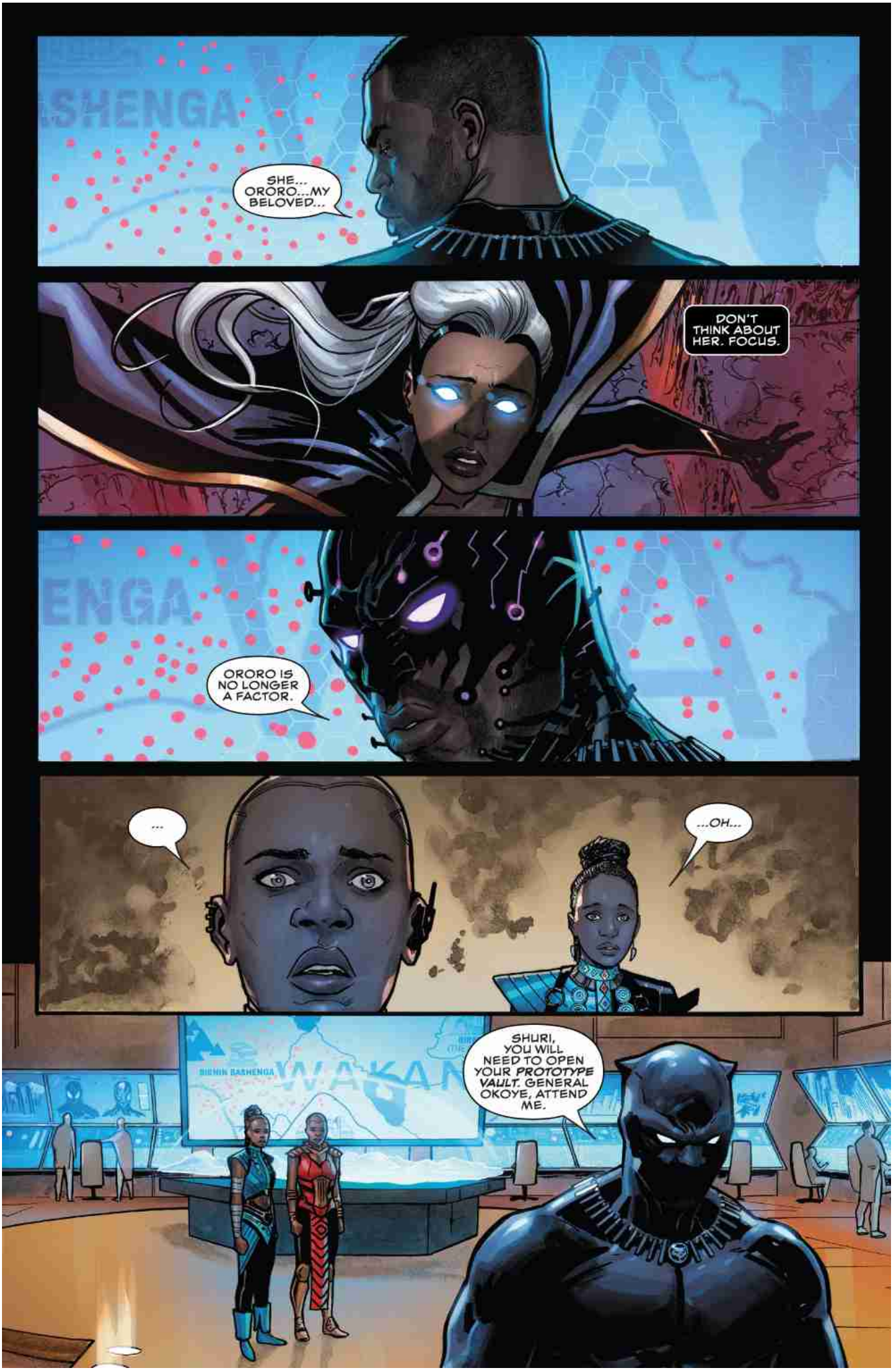
BUT BY BAST'S TEETH--
--NO MORE OF YOU WILL FALL!
SHMMMMMMMMM
ZAMM
ULOYISO," MY KING! WE HAVE WON!
"XHOSA FOR "VICTORY."
T'CHALLA!
T'CHALLA!
T'CHALLA!
NONE OF THAT. THE PULSE WILL NOT WORK A SECOND TIME. THE CREATURES WILL ADAPT IN MOMENTS...

BIRNIN ZANA.
"...AND THERE ARE MANY MILES BETWEEN HERE AND HOME."
NO!
FORGET THE STRUCTURES, CAPTAIN, JUST GET THOSE PEOPLE INTO THE HYDRO-SKIFF. NOW!
BRING UP THE SECOND LINEAR MODEL. QUICKLY, PLEASE.
PRINCESS! THE JABARI-LANDS ARE BEING OVERRUN. I'VE LOST CONTACT WITH BIRNIN BASHENGA. YOU MUST FIND A WAY TO STRENGTHEN THE BORDER SHIELD.
OVERLAY WITH THE MOST RECENT EXPONENTIAL MODEL. THANK YOU.
SHURI. ARE YOU LISTENING?
A LINEAR TRACK GIVES US DAYS UNTIL COMPLETE COMPROMISE. EXPONENTIAL TRACK... HOURS?
CURSE IT, SHURI. THE SHIELD HAS SEVEN BREACHES NOW. YOU HAVE TO--
THE SHIELD WON'T HELP.
WE'RE LOSING PEOPLE! COMMUNICATIONS ARE FAILING IN THE OUTER REGIONS!
EXPECTED. THE INFECTION INCREASES THEIR NUMBERS AT THE SAME RATE THEY CUT OURS.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "INFECTION"?
REMOVE YOUR HAND AT ONCE, GENERAL.
APOLOGIES, PRINCESS. YOU SAY INFECTION, BUT THIS IS AN *INVASION.*
WAKANDA IS ALIVE, OKOYE. IT LIVES, IT BREATHES.
KNULL'S ***SYMBIOTE ARMY*** ISN'T INVADING IN ANY CONVENTIONAL WAY. THEY HAVE NO GUNSHIPS, NO TANKS, NO BATTLE SUITS.
THEY AREN'T DESTROYING STRUCTURES, HOLDING TERRITORY, DROPPING BOMBS.
THEY ARE KILLING SOME OF OUR PEOPLE, YES, BUT ***TRANSFORMING*** MORE. THE PATTERN MIRRORS A VIRAL INFECTION GROWING IN WAKANDA'S BODY.
THEN WE FIGHT THEM. OUR WEAPONS, OUR TECHNOLOGY--
THE MATH ISN'T WITH US.
OUR BEST OPTION IS TO GATHER EVERY SURVIVOR WE CAN AND ***RUN.***
ARE YOU SAYING... EVACUATE...***ALL*** OF WAKANDA?
IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE OUR PEOPLE.
PRAGMATIC AS ALWAYS, MY SISTER, BUT I DISAGREE.

THERE IS ALWAYS ANOTHER WAY.
WARRIORS, SECURE THE CORE PERIMETER.
CORE, PROVIDE INTERFACE.
T'CHALLA! YOU'RE HERE!
I AM HERE. HELLO, SHURI. GENERAL.
MY KING.
YOU ARE MONITORING THE STATUS OF THE INCURSION, I ASSUME.
WE'RE FIGHTING THESE CREATURES AS BEST WE CAN, BUT FOR EVERY ONE WE KILL--
THEY TRANSFORM TWO OF OURS. OR MORE.
TECTONIC MAPPING, PLEASE. TOPOGRAPHIC AS WELL. AND SECURITY SYSTEMS.
THE BORDER SHIELD HAS SEVEN BREACHES. THE CREATURES STREAM IN VIA THESE POINTS, MASSING IN STRATEGIC SPACES BEFORE STREAMING OUT AGAIN.
OBVIOUSLY, YOU NOTED THIS PATTERN, SHURI. AN INFECTION.
T'CHALLA...
WAKAN


THE BREACHES CANNOT BE SEALED. DO NOT WASTE TIME ON THAT. INSTEAD--
JUST TELL US HOW TO FIGHT THEM. THESE THINGS ARE... UNNATURAL...THEY CORRUPT EVERYTHING THEY TOUCH.
T'CHALLA...
WAKANDA
BIRNIN BASHENGA IS LOST. THE JABARI-LANDS ARE LOST. I HAVE SENT WARRIORS TO BEGIN EVACUATION OF THE REMAINING CITIES... THE NECROPOLIS MUST BE SEALED...
YOU ALSO MEAN FOR US TO RUN? HIDE? I THOUGHT YOU WOULD HAVE ANOTHER WAY.
T'CHALLA...
THE FIRST PRIORITY IS THE SAFETY OF THE PEOPLE. THOSE WHO CANNOT ESCAPE THE CITIES MUST TAKE SHELTER IN THE BUNKERS. THE REST--
FORGIVE ME, MY KING, BUT THERE WILL BE NO ESCAPING THESE THINGS.
WARRIORS WILL FIGHT. THE DORA MILAJE WILL FIGHT. THE HATUT ZERAZE WILL FIGHT. BUT MOST OF OUR PEOPLE ARE NOT SOLDIERS.
WHAT OF THE YOUNG? THE OLD? THE FRAIL? ALL THOSE WHO CAN'T RUN FAST OR FAR ENOUGH? WHAT BECOMES OF THEM?
T'CHALLA...
WHERE IS STORM?


SHENGA
SHE... ORORO...MY BELOVED...
DON'T THINK ABOUT HER. FOCUS.
ENGA
ORORO IS NO LONGER A FACTOR.
...
...OH...
SHURI, YOU WILL NEED TO OPEN YOUR PROTOTYPE VAULT. GENERAL OKOYE, ATTEND ME.
WAKAN

OPEN MY VAULT? T'CHALLA, DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MANY--
NUMBER FOURTEEN. NOTHING IN THE OTHERS WILL BE USEFUL.
BUT THAT VAULT'S FOR PROJECTS THAT FOCUS ON--
OUR PEOPLE WILL NEED TO BE BROUGHT TO THE CITY SHELTERS, PROTECTED FROM THE INVADERS. YOU WILL LEAD THAT OPERATION PERSONALLY, SISTER.
THEY WILL NEED TO SEE YOU LEADING, GIVING THEM CONFIDENCE THIS WILL COME OUT ALL RIGHT.
T'CHALLA, THEY NEED YOU. FOR ALL THAT AND MORE.
WE MUST STAND AND FIGHT THESE CREATURES, MY KING. AN ORGANIZED MILITARY RESPONSE, NOW, WHILE WE HAVE TIME--
SHURI WILL PROTECT THE PEOPLE. YOU, OKOYE, WILL PILOT THE HAND OF BAST.
WHAT?!
SURELY ALL WE NEED TO DO IS GATHER OUR FORCES. THE WARRIORS YOU BROUGHT WITH YOU SURVIVED THEIR FIGHT. WE--
I LOST MORE THAN HALF OF THEM GETTING HERE. THEIR VIBRANIUM ALLOY ARMOR IS NOT PROOF AGAINST THE CREATURES' INFECTION.
BUT IF WE STRENGTHEN THE SHIELD BARRIER--
JUST GIVE ME THREE HOURS. TWO.
WE DO NOT HAVE TWO HOURS.
CORE. PROVIDE SURVEILLANCE IMAGING OF CENTRAL NIGANDA.
BREEP

POPSY
MIKE
TOMY
THE DRAGON IS COMING.
CORE. ZOOM 1000-PERCENT. GROUND LEVEL.
BREEP
THE DRAGON IS A PLAGUE STORM, TRANSFORMING ALL ANIMAL LIFE IN ITS WAKE INTO THE CREATURES INVADING WAKANDA.
WHO, IN TURN, TRANSFORM OR KILL ALL THEY CAN.
THIS IS HAPPENING ALL OVER AFRICA. ALL OVER THE WORLD.
THIS IS WAKANDA'S FATE IF THE ENEMY'S PROGRESS CANNOT BE STOPPED.

SOULS OF THE MOTHERS...
WE MUST...WE MUST MODIFY THE BORDER SHIELD... DIVERT MORE POWER...
THE SHIELD WILL NOT PROTECT US. THE INVADERS EXPLOITED A FREQUENCY VARIANCE IN ORDER TO GET IN.
ADDED POWER MAKES NO DIFFERENCE. THE SHIELD CAN ONLY SLOW THEM, NO MORE.
BREEP
CORE, CEASE IMAGING.
THERE IS NO MORE TIME FOR DEBATE. YOU MUST DO AS I SAY NOW.
YOU MUST TRUST THAT I HAVE A PLAN TO SAVE US, THOUGH I CANNOT TELL YOU THE DETAILS.
YOU MUST TRUST ME.

CORE. RELAY CASUALTY REPORTS TO MY KIMOYO CLUSTER.
BREEP
YOU'RE CERTAIN? IF WE REVEAL THE HAND OF BAST TO THE WORLD...
WE WILL TEACH THESE CREATURES WHAT IT MEANS TO CROSS OUR BORDERS, OKOYE.
JUST AS WE TAUGHT THE SKRULLS.*
*BACK IN SECRET INVASION: BLACK PANTHER! --WIL
AWAIT MY ORDER, GENERAL. BE READY.
ULOYISO, MY KING.

TINK
WELCOME BACK, PRINCESS.
HELLO, VAULT.
WHAT DISCIPLINE WILL YOU EXPLORE TODAY?
ALCHEMY.
"T'CHALLA.
ISHUMI NANE
"I HEAR YOU RAN AWAY FROM MARTIAL TRAINING TODAY. IS THIS SO?"

THE TEST WAS UNFAIR. TEACHER MOESWE CHANGED THE RULES.
INDEED?
AND WHAT RULES WERE THOSE?
"IT WAS TO BE SINGLE COMBAT. INSTEAD THERE WERE *FIVE*.
"THREE WERE *JABARI*. ALL OLDER THAN ME. ONE HAD A BATTLE CLUB."
"I SEE... AND THEY DEFEATED YOU?"
"THEY BEAT ME, FATHER. THEY HURT ME. THEY *CHEATED*."
"YOU FOUGHT YOUR BEST, NO? ONE OF THE BOYS WENT TO THE HEALERS, DID HE NOT?"
"I *LOST*. I AM THE PRINCE. ONE DAY I WILL BE KING. I CANNOT ALLOW--"
"STOP.
"DO YOU KNOW THE TALE OF BAST AND ANANSI'S DRUM?"
TECH
"YES, OF COURSE, BUT--"
"TELL IT TO ME, PLEASE."
VAULT. A RING OF LIGHT, PLEASE. AND SEAL THE DOOR.
YES, PRINCESS.

TECH
SHADES OF MY MOTHERS, GUIDE ME. SHADES OF MY FATHERS, DEFEND.
HEART OF MY BROTHER BESIDE ME. SOULS OF MY SISTERS--
ZISWA KOMICS
--BEGIN!
UKUSUKA KWENYE, EZININZI!
UKUSUKA KWENYE, EZININZI!
UKUSUKA KWENYE, EZININZI!
UKUSUKA KWENYE, EZININZI!
UKUSUKA KWENYE, EZININZI!
UKUSUKA KWENYE, EZININZI!
RUMMBLE
ALL RIGHT, ULYSSES...
IT IS TIME YOU PAID YOUR DEBT.
"EVERYONE HURRY! WARRIORS! DEFEND!"

FALL BACK! FORM A WALL! BRACE!
BIRNIN BASHENGA.
PROTECT OUR PEOPLE! LET NONE OF THESE THINGS THROUGH!
SO MANY, CAPTAIN SELE! TOO MANY! HOW CAN WE HOPE TO HOLD THEM ALL?
WE WILL HOLD THEM BECAUSE WE MUST, WARRIOR!
?!

FOR WE ARE WAKANDA!
GET THE PEOPLE TO THE SUB-SHELTERS! NOTHING CAN PENETRATE THOSE DOORS.
THIS WAS MY PLAN, PRINCESS, BUT HOW...
HOW ARE YOU DOING THIS?!
MAGIC PLUS SCIENCE EQUALS ALCHEMY, CAPTAIN. I'M HERE WITH YOU AND THE CITY GUARD...
...I'M WITH THE HATUT ZERAZE...
BIRNIN MUTATA.
...AND THE DORA MILAJE.
SO TRUST ME...
BIRNIN AZZARIA.

...WAKANDA WILL NOT FALL TODAY!
SHURI. ARE YOU WELL, SISTER?
HARD HOLDING THIS MANY SPIRIT DOLLS AT ONCE.
FYI, THESE CREATURES ARE ADAPTING TO OUR WEAPONS.
HMM.
A MAN CALLED EDDIE BROCK GAVE US A DESCRIPTION OF THE ALIENS' MOLECULAR STRUCTURE. IT IS SIMILAR TO REED RICHARDS' UNSTABLE PARTICLES.
IS THAT VERIFIED? FACTUAL?
INDEED. IT IS WHY MY FORCE PULSE AT THE BORDER WAS INSUFFICIENT.
I ASSUME YOU'RE PREPARING A COUNTERMEASURE?
RIGHT NOW, YES. THOUGH THE WORK IS... DELICATE...TIME-CONSUMING.
THEN WHY ARE YOU WASTING TIME TALKING TO ME?
I... WANTED TO APOLOGIZE.
APOLOGIZE? FOR WHAT?

AH. I SEE.
KRAKKKK!
RAAARRRRRRR!!
YOU WERE WAITING FOR THE DRAGON.
I HOPE THIS WORKS, BROTHER. I REALLY HOPE IT--
WOOORRRRRCHHHH!!!
OKOYE, ARE YOU MONITORING?
OF COURSE, MY KING. IS IT TIME?
YES--

"DEPLOY THE HAND OF BAST."
RARRRGH!
I PRAY TO THE ANCESTORS IT WILL BE ENOUGH!
THE HAND OF BAST WAS BUILT TO KILL THE PHOENIX.
YOU WERE BORN TO PROTECT WAKANDA.

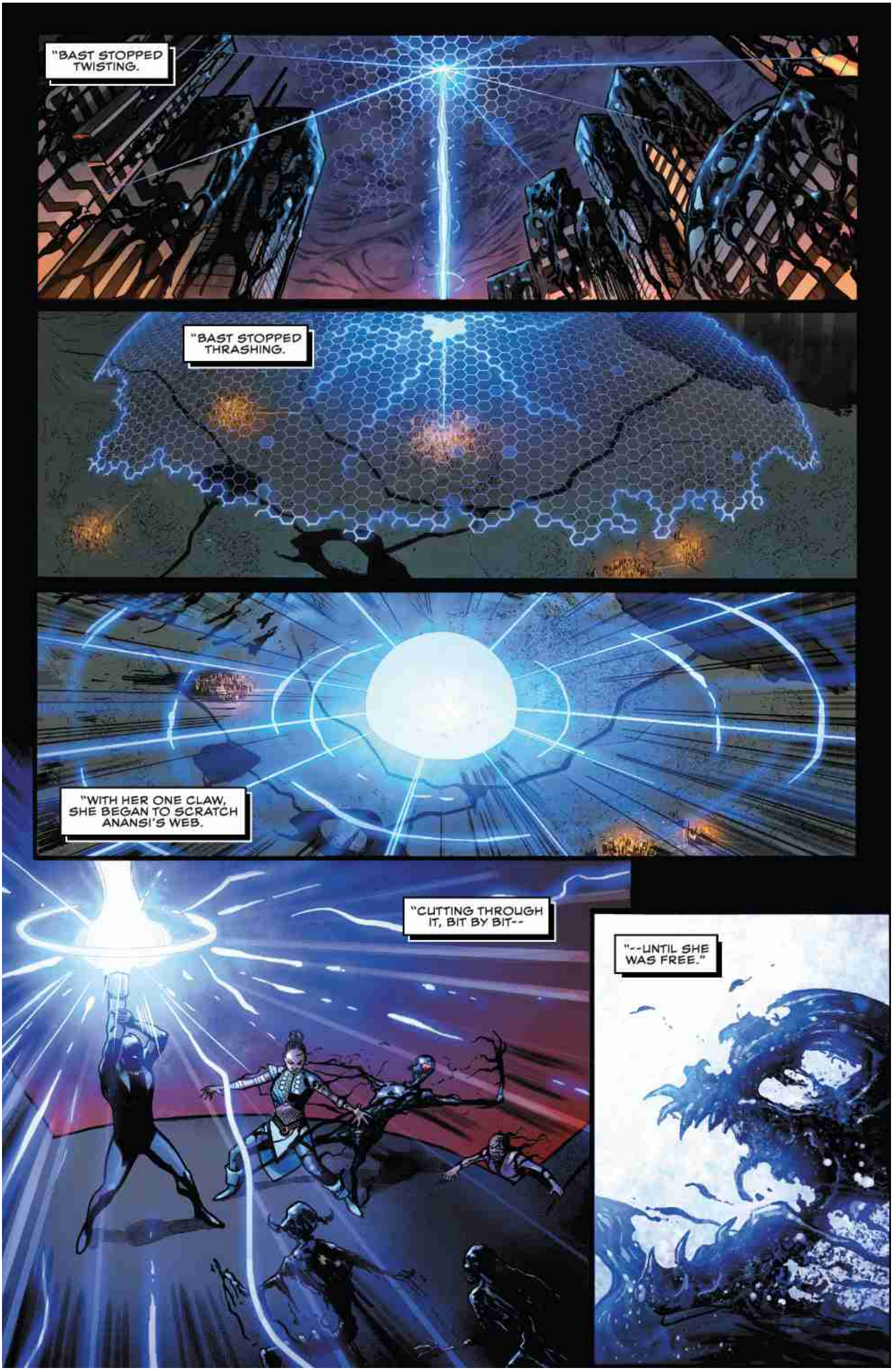
YOU WILL BE A MATCH FOR ONE DRAGON.
ULOYISO!
"THE STORY, T'CHALLA. I AM WAITING."
"YES, FATHER.
"IT IS KNOWN THAT BAST WAS ALWAYS JEALOUS OF HER YOUNGER BROTHER, ANANSI, THE MAKER OF SECRETS AND STORIES.
"BAST IS THE GODDESS OF MANY THINGS, BUT ALSO, SHE IS A CAT. CURIOUS.
RRGGH!
"SHE WAS FOREVER SNEAKING INTO ANANSI'S WORKSHOP, SPYING ON HIS CREATIONS.
HSSSS!
"ONE DAY ANANSI HAD ENOUGH. HE PLAYED A TRICK ON HIS SISTER.
T'CHALLA...

LOOK... WHAT YOU DID...TO ME!
YOU... GAVE ME... TO KNULL!
KNULL... ATE MY... ALCHEMY! AND WHEN HE...TOOK ALL...MY SPIRIT DOLLS...
"ANANSI WOVE A GREAT DRUM MADE OF SILK AND STARS AND STORIES.
"DAZZLED BY THE SIGHT OF IT, BAST COULD NOT HELP HERSELF.
"SHE POUNCED UPON THE DRUM, HOPING TO LEARN WHAT ANANSI HAD HIDDEN THERE.
...KNULL TOOK...ME!
KLIK
"BUT THE DRUM...WAS NOT A DRUM. BAST SOON FOUND HERSELF TRAPPED INSIDE.
THIS...IS YOUR...FINAL WEAPON? KLAW'S... SONIC EMITTER?
EVEN...IF IT TOUCHED ME...IT'S TOO SMALL... TOO WEAK...
I KNOW.

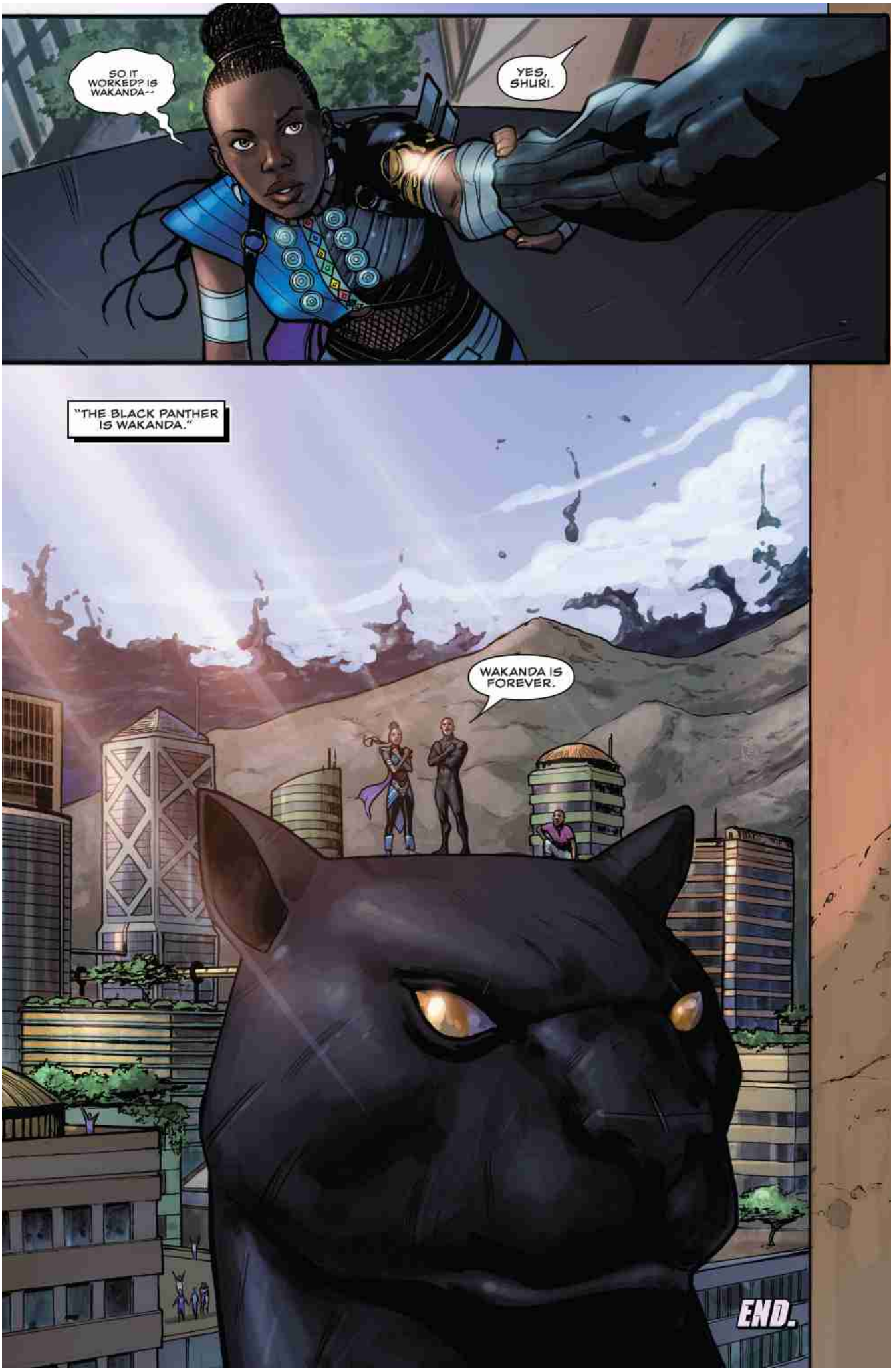
"THE MORE SHE STRUGGLED, THE MORE SHE WAS COVERED IN THE THREADS OF SPIDER-SILK.
"SOON SHE WAS WRAPPED ALL OVER WITH IT, STUCK IN PLACE, INSIDE ANANSI'S DRUM.
"BAST THRASHED AND SCREAMED, BUT ANANSI'S SILK WAS STRONG.
UGH!
"AS POWERFUL AS SHE WAS, BAST NEARLY GAVE UP.
"BUT THEN SHE REALIZED ANANSI'S WEB HAD NOT COVERED HER WHOLE BODY.
"ONE CLAW ON ONE PAW HAD BEEN LEFT FREE.
HNNG!
KNULL IS... BETTER...THAN ALL OF US, BROTHER. KNULL CAME...BEFORE MAGIC...BEFORE SCIENCE...
BEFORE... LIFE!

AAA!
SLICE
YOU ARE NOT MY SISTER!
YOU ARE A POWERFUL ENTITY, IMPOSSIBLY ADAPTIVE, BUT YOU HAVE VULNERABILITIES.
ELECTRO-MAGNETISM. HIGH FREQUENCY VIBRATION.
WAKANDA MASTERED BOTH CENTURIES AGO.
"MASTERED"? HA! EVEN YOUR PRECIOUS BARRIER SHIELD COULDN'T KEEP OUT KNULL.
HAHAHAHA!
KNULL WILL EAT YOU AS HE HAS EATEN YOUR BELOVED AND YOUR SISTER! KNULL WILL EAT YOUR WORLD!
I THINK NOT.
THE BARRIER FAILED AS A SHIELD, BUT IT WILL MAKE AN EXCELLENT AMPLIFIER.

GOODBYE, KNULL.
"BAST STOPPED SCREAMING.


"BAST STOPPED TWISTING.
"BAST STOPPED THRASHING.
"WITH HER ONE CLAW, SHE BEGAN TO SCRATCH ANANSI'S WEB.
"CUTTING THROUGH IT, BIT BY BIT--
"--UNTIL SHE WAS FREE."

"DO YOU SEE THE LESSON, T'CHALLA?"
"I DO, FATHER.
"I WAS SMALL. I WAS OUTNUMBERED.
"LIKE WAKANDA."
"AND IS WAKANDA *WEAK*? IS WAKANDA *DEFEATED*?"
"NO, FATHER. NEVER."
"AND WHY IS THAT, MY SON?"
"BECAUSE NO MATTER THE OBSTACLE, NO MATTER THE CHALLENGE, WE USE THE *CLAW WE HAVE* TO WIN."
"AND *WHO* IS WAKANDA, T'CHALLA?"


SO IT WORKED? IS WAKANDA--
YES, SHURI.
"THE BLACK PANTHER IS WAKANDA."
WAKANDA IS FOREVER.
END.

WAKANDA is the most scientifically and technologically advanced country on the planet. That level of advancement has not always led to peaceful relations with its neighbors. Fortunately for Wakanda, its borders are protected by hills, mountains, and the sprawling Lake Nyanza.

The only exception to this is the open Nigandan border. Niganda is Wakanda's poorer neighbor to the south, and according to legend, that poverty is not an accident. The Alkama Fields, which for centuries functioned as the breadbasket of Wakanda, is believed by the Nigandans to have once been theirs. In Nigandan history, it is not the vibranium of the Mena Ngai (The Great Mound) that allowed Wakanda to advance to such illustrious heights, it is the seizure of Alkama. The Nigandans, envious of Wakanda's rise, have never forgotten this ancient injury.

JABARI-LANDS

BIRNIN T'CHAKA

MOHANNDA

BIRNIN DJATA

BIRNIN ZANA
(THE GOLDEN CITY)

NECROPOLIS
(THE CITY OF THE DEAD)

BIRNIN BASHENGA

WAKANDA

NYANZA
(LAKE VICTORIA)

MENA NGAI
(THE GREAT MOUND)

CANAAN

BIRNIN AZZARIA

BIRNIN S'YAN

ALKAMA FIELDS

AZANIA

NIGANDA

On this map are various cities beginning with the appellation "Birnin" -- Wakandan for "city." Each city on this map is named after a famous Black Panther, and each is actually more like a fortress than a city, protecting the entryways into Wakanda.

Wakanda was navigable mostly by a system of rivers, and the political geography of the country is still dominated by this fact.

MAP BY
TA-NEHISI COATES
& MANNY MEDEROS

KING IN BLACK

NEXT:

Want more **KING IN BLACK**? Pick up issue #4 next week!

Need more **BLACK PANTHER**? Don't miss the kickoff of the end of Ta-Nehisi Coates's legendary run – issue #23 is on sale in two weeks!

ZONE